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THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 8 May 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Bandung, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 April 1995, considered, among other issues, the situation in Burundi.

Following their exchange of views, the Ministers adopted the following statement:

"The Ministers expressed concern over the latest developments in Burundi, which have been marked by the escalation of violence triggered by some organized militias, causing immense human suffering and extensive material damage. They stressed that the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in Burundi lies primarily with the people and the Coalition Government established on the basis of the Convention of Government signed on 10 September 1994. They expressed support for the ongoing efforts of the Government of Burundi to effect national reconciliation through confidence-building programmes among the various components of society. They underscored the crucial role that could be played by the international community and the neighbouring countries in bringing about lasting peace in Burundi. In that regard, the Ministers commended the initiatives taken by the leaders in the subregion, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at ministerial level, the recent good offices missions of the United Nations Security Council and all the humanitarian assistance offered to the Government of Burundi in its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people, particularly internally displaced

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or repatriated persons. The Ministers noted the heavy burden of refugees on neighbouring countries and the need to find a durable solution. They called upon the international community to intensify their support for the Government of Burundi and regional initiatives in their endeavours towards national reconciliation and stabilization of the country. In this context, they endorsed the United Nations Security Council President's statement of 29 March 1995 (S/PRST/1995/13), which, inter alia, called upon all States, in particular countries neighbouring Burundi, to deny any sanctuary or assistance to the extremist elements within and outside Burundi, and to continue taking all possible measures to ensure that those elements are prevented from carrying out any kind of destabilizing activities from their territories. Furthermore, the Ministers called on all the parties in Burundi to intensify their efforts aimed at achieving national reconciliation and restoring national unity, which has been seriously undermined.

"The Ministers noted with satisfaction the outcome of the Regional Conference on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region, convened from 14 to 17 February 1995 at Bujumbura, and called for the effective implementation of the programme of action adopted by the Conference. They called on the international community and neighbouring countries to reinforce further their coordinated and integrated responses and to strengthen appropriate links and complementarity among the various programmes adopted to resolve the plight of refugees. The Ministers confirmed that States hosting large numbers of refugees should receive the maximum possible assistance from the international community in order to ease their economic difficulties and to facilitate their voluntary repatriation, taking into account the humanitarian and non-political nature of such assistance."

These views expressed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries reflect perfectly the position of the Government of Burundi.

The United Nations Security Council may wish to translate the views expressed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries into action, for instance, by assisting the Government of Burundi in its efforts to disarm and disband the militias and other illegal armed organizations that are not only undermining the peace and security of Burundi but also putting all the countries of the region at risk.

The Coalition Government in Burundi is determined to put an end to the militarization of Burundi society. However, its efforts, no matter how vigorous, will be entirely successful only if accompanied by concerted international action. The United Nations Security Council should rapidly devise a strategy stemming the illegal supply of weapons in the region. This arms traffic is in fact arming the extremists who maintain the militias and other armed gangs involved in the destabilization of Burundi.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 26 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tharcisse NTAKIBIRORA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative